



# Anointing Jesus

**Goal: To do acts of kindness for others as the woman did for Jesus.**

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Mark 14:3-9

There is beauty in the gift. It is an alabaster jar, translucent, with scented amber oil inside. The oil is spikenard, or nard, and comes from the Himalayas. Luxury. It is a calming scent and used for burial. Purpose. The jar is sealed with wax and must be broken to open it. Extravagance. The woman pours the entire contents of the jar on Jesus' head and shoulders. Anointing. She rubs it into his head, neck, and shoulders, easing away the tensions, blessing the moment. Soothing. Jesus recognizes that she is preparing his body for burial, for there will be no opportunity when the time comes. Knowing. Wherever the story of Jesus is shared—the good news—this woman and her act of extravagant kindness, of beauty and blessing, will be told. Remembrance.

The others in the room, his followers, don't know and can't see. They, with the woman, are in the here and now. The difference is that the woman's present is focused on Jesus while the others see waste and blame. They wish to scold rather than bless. Jesus calls them on this. "Why do you trouble her?" he asks. Jesus, who lifts up and blesses the poor in every circumstance, knows that there will always be opportunities for kindness to them, but his time is limited. The woman, knowingly or not, pours out not only the oil but also herself as she offers love and generosity to Jesus.

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

What does an act of extravagant kindness look like to children? For most children, extravagance is all about the thing and less about the experience or act. They may focus on the beauty of the alabaster jar or the expensiveness of the oil because the act of kindness seems so small (and in the case of pouring oil on someone's head, kind of icky!). The extravagance, in this case, was the sacrifice, the extra she was willing to give, and the risk she took in giving it. Her act cost her something, not just giving up an expensive oil, but putting herself out there, open to criticism and judgment. Those are the acts of kindness that are truly from one's self and one's heart.

### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

How do we model acts of kindness the way the woman did and help children understand the effort and sacrifice she showed? It's often easy to do something that doesn't matter much to us even though it helps another, such as making a card or going through the cupboards and giving away the canned vegetables or soup you don't like. What would it be like to have to work a bit harder to let someone know they are cared for? Perhaps cleaning the kitchen when you'd rather be playing a game or giving away the boxed mac and cheese that you love for dinner are examples of extravagant acts of kindness that children can understand.

*Gracious God, you love us so extravagantly! May we show others overflowing kindness and love. Amen.*



## Supplies

**Music & Melodies**  
(MM) 2023–2024

**Stories, Colors & More**  
(SCM) i–iv, 13, 14, 19

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

small jar of fragrant oil,  
cotton balls (optional)

## Guided Play

choice 1: items that represent the five senses, such as: lotion or scented candle; a beautiful picture, such as landscape or seascape; a music player with a soothing piece of instrumental music, such as flute or harp; a small tasty snack, such as candy, apple slice, cookie, or similar; a very soft piece of cloth, such as velvet or fleece

choice 2: 4 cups of all-purpose flour, ½ cup + 1 tablespoon of baby oil

choice 3: copies of  
**Grace Notes (GN) 1**

## Exploring

choice 2: bowls of warm water, fragrant soaps, towels

choice 4: copies of **GN 2**

## GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

### Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

Before the session, prepare a small jar of olive oil with a fragrance using lavender, rosemary, or an essential oil.

“Exploring God’s Grace” choices 1 and 2 require more prep.

### Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.” Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers whom you do not know personally. Tell the parents/caregivers that today’s story is about a woman who showed Jesus great kindness by blessing him.

Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

- 1. Fragrant Smells, Beautiful Sights, Lovely Sounds, Delicious Tastes, Soft Touches**—Set out at least one each of items that appeal to the five senses. Invite the children to smell, see, hear, taste, and touch and talk together about how our senses help us enjoy our world.
- 2. Cloud Dough**—Put the flour and baby oil in a large bowl or plastic bin. Allow the children to mix the flour and oil with their hands feeling how soft it is. Invite the children to smell the dough. Have them experiment with molding the dough.
- 3. Jar of Nard**—Provide copies of **GN 1** and invite the children to color the jar of nard. Explain that nard was a very expensive oil, like a perfume, that people used in Jesus’ time. Tell the children that they will hear a story about this very expensive oil and how a woman shared it.

**T** *Washing hands can take time! Waiting in line for the sink may make some children anxious. Devise a routine for your group so they know what to expect. Use a song, movement poem, or physical activity to match the time required.*



## Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “Praise God, Praise God”—**MM 7**; **SCM 14**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

## Jump and Shout

M MS L T

Using the tune to the song “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” teach the children the following song:

If you’re happy and you know it,  
jump and shout! (*jump and shout*)  
If you’re a helper and you know it,  
jump and shout! (*jump and shout*)  
If you’re happy and you know it,  
then your face will surely show it.  
If you’re happy and you know it,  
sit and rest! (*sit down, hands in lap*)

## We Are God’s Family

L T TD

Say the action poem, inviting the children to repeat after you and follow your motions:

You and you and you and you (*point to those in the circle*)  
are part of God’s big family. (*hug yourself*)  
I stretch my arms to hold you all, (*stretch your arms around each child on each side*)  
a great big circle we will be. (*all hold hands together*)  
God’s arms reach around the world (*stretch arms out wide*)  
and hold each child in loving care. (*hug yourself*)  
For God gives us all we need each day (*pat your head on top*)  
and God loves it when we share. (*hug yourself and then stretch your arms out wide*)



A similar story from Luke’s Gospel can be found in *Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com).

## Hearing the Story

SD L

Open the Bible to Mark 14 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about a woman who showed Jesus great kindness by blessing him.

Read **SCM 13**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Show the children the small jar of fragrant oil you have prepared. Tell the children that, whenever they hear the word *oil*, they will pass the jar of oil to their neighbor to hold and smell. Read the story again, passing the jar of oil to the child on your left as you begin.



If you feel that passing a small jar of oil may spill, pour some of the oil on cotton balls and place them in a bowl or plastic ziplock bag for the children to pass and smell.

## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE



### 1. A Book of Favorites

F LG L FM

*Before the session, label three sheets of paper for each child with each of the following titles: "My Favorite Toys," "My Favorite Foods," and "Favorite Things I Share."*

Remind the children that the woman shared with Jesus something that was very special to her.

Hand out the sheets of paper labeled "My Favorite Toys" to the children. Invite them to draw pictures of their favorite toys. When they have finished with those pictures, give them a sheet labeled "My Favorite Foods" and ask them to draw their favorite foods. When those pictures are finished, hand out sheets labeled "Favorite Things I Share." Wonder together which of their favorite toys and foods they might share with a friend. Invite them to draw a picture of them sharing a favorite with a friend.

Have the children stack the three papers with the "Favorite Things I Share" on the bottom. Help them staple their papers together, forming a booklet.



### 2. Washing Each Other's Hands

LG FA SD

Set up bowls with warm water, fragrant soaps, and soft towels. At a table or in a circle on the floor, invite pairs of children to wash and dry each other's hands. Wonder how it feels, if they enjoy having their hands washed, and how it feels to wash someone else's hands. Wonder how Jesus might have felt being cared for by the woman's kindness.

**LG** *Look for opportunities for children to practice leadership and generosity, such as helping set up the space, passing out papers, holding visual aids, or offering help to other children.*

### 3. Sharing Game

C

Gather children to stand in a circle. Tell them that they are going to play a sharing game, using their imaginations. Ask them to imagine the very best thing they would like to get, and imagine getting that and then sharing it with others. When everyone has had a chance to think of something, start the game.

Say, "I have in my hands \_\_\_\_\_," and pretend to hold it. Describe the thing you imagined getting. Then say, "I want to share it with you." Walk around the inside of the circle and share it with



Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

#### 4. Coloring Page



Hand out copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of the woman anointing Jesus. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “What was the woman thankful for?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did Jesus feel receiving this gift?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What do you want to thank God for?”

**SD** *Smells can affect our memories, emotions, and behaviors. For children with sensory issues, smells can be a source of anxiety that can be distracting and overwhelming. If the scent is overwhelming or difficult for the child, allow them to walk away from the activity.*

### LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children together, singing “Jesus Says God Cares for Us”—**MM 12; SCM 19**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Remind the children that Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God and love your neighbor. Ask them how they will show love for God and love for their neighbor this week.

If you would like to share a snack, now would be a good time. Pray, inviting the children to repeat after you:

A, B, C, D, E, F, G. /  
 Thank you, God, for feeding me. /  
 H, I, J, K. /  
 Hear us pray. /  
 L, M, N, O. /  
 Here we go. /  
 P, Q, R, S, T, U, V. /  
 Thank you, God, for hearing me. /  
 W, X, Y, and Z. /  
 Thank you, God, for loving me. /  
 Amen! /

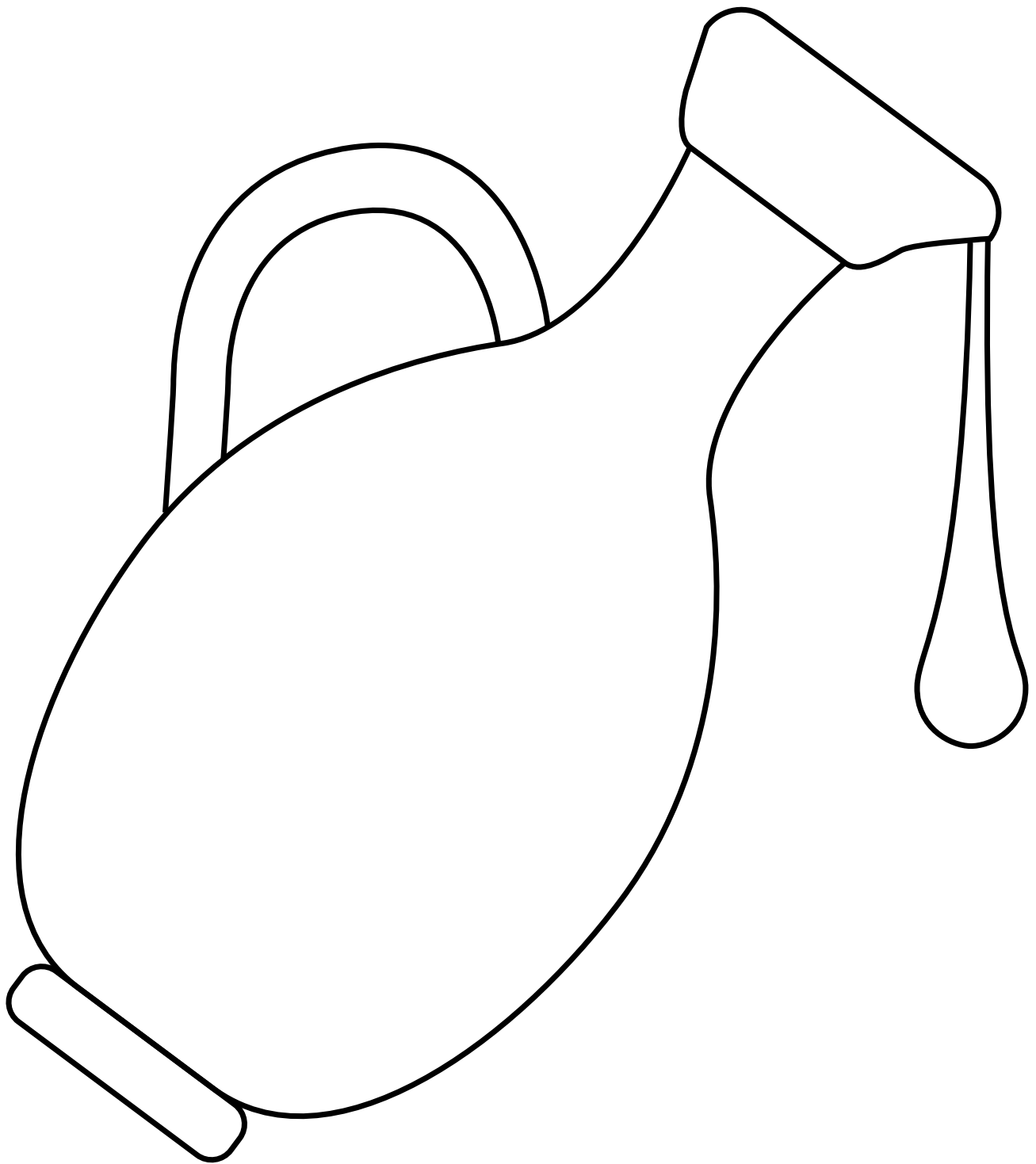
If you had a small jar of fragrant oil or cotton balls for “Hearing the Story,” anoint each child on the back of their hand with a small dab of oil. Bless them as they leave, saying, “(Name), Jesus loves you. The grace of God goes with you.”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads).

Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).









## Anointing Jesus



A woman blesses Jesus by anointing him with oil.

